EAST BAY EXPRESS

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DRIFTING FOREST

page 32

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NEWS&OPINION

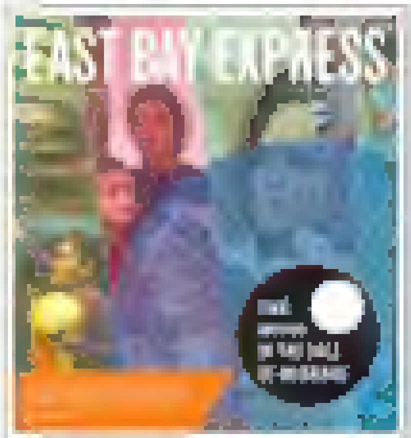
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NEWS&OPINION



The Oakland City Council routinely waives the competitive bidding process. [illegible]

There's More

[illegible]

Same Old City Hall

[illegible]

LETTERS

A Resignation Is in Order

[illegible]

It's Past Time for Apologies

[illegible]

We Need to Invest in Reform

[illegible]

Throw the Bums Out

The Gentrification of Weed Is Nothing to Celebrate

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The Politics of Protests

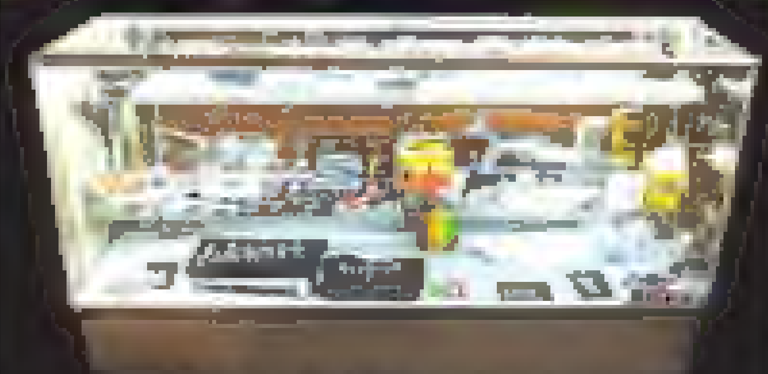
Large demonstrations and acts of vandalism are not going away until moderates and liberals can get on the same page about the need for change.

By Robert Gammon

[illegible]







Need A Gift for Mom?

How about paying for a babysitter and giving her a joint this Mother's Day? It's pro-family.

By David Downs

This Mother's Day, don't forget about mom when you shop at your local dispensary," quipped Amanda Conley, from the Bay Area chapter of Women Grow — a cannabis industry networking organization.

"Give your mother a joint — maybe even a topical or some infused chocolates," added Women Grow's Shabnam Malek.

The idea might seem a bit cheeky, but it's never been more apt. The intersection of cannabis legalization and gender equity is hotter in 2015 than it's ever been, and Mother's Day is a great chance to review the changing roles of women and moms in legalization.

Simply put: Women are the key to undoing decades of cannabis prohibition, said Dale Sky Jones, an Oakland mother of two, chancellor of Oaksterdam, and head of the most credible California legalization 2016 group, ReformCA.

Women will be the key swing vote that will decide the fate of California legalization next year, Jones said.

Women Grow representatives note that women tend to trust other women, and they are fast becoming the new face of cannabis activism and industry.

When women partner with police, they have an unassailable moral high ground, added Diane Goldstein, a mother with Law Enforcement Against Prohibition.

Finally, women are in the number-one position for enforcing social norms with regard to cannabis use, via parenting, partner choices, and the almighty power of the purse.

Moms became the face of legalization in Colorado and Washington in 2012 and it worked.

ReformCA will be extensively targeting women in its upcoming legalization campaign starting later this year. "We're up 16 or 20 percent [approval] with men, but we're barely at 50 with women," Jones said. "That means there's 15 percent of households where the man is for it and the woman is against.

"If all you ever see is a single white male comedian cracking jokes about pot and saying, 'It should be legalized,' what the hell does that have in common with any mother out there?" Jones continued.

"By putting a woman out front, we're not only giving women a relatable face, we're connecting the dots and saying, 'Look, mom, this isn't about needing pot or allowing adults to smoke pot. This is about not putting a kid in jail — because they made a dumbass mistake — for them to learn the real consequences, instead of a counselor and maybe the back of your hand.'"

Just as important as political messaging is women's growing role in the industry. The Bay Area chapter of Women Grow started in October, and is up to 80 attendees each month, with the next meeting scheduled to be held at 7 Stars dispensary in Richmond on May 7.

Women Grow attendees are networking like crazy and learning how to break into the male-dominated industry with products geared toward women. That means flowers like the new designer strain Bangus, pitched by women entrepreneurs as a female libido aid. More strains specifically for women's health issues are also set to launch.

Jane West, Colorado's co-founder of Women Grow, noted that moms can have a glass of wine and be seen as normal.

"Well, cannabis is the glass of wine for the moms of certain states in 2015," Conley added.

Women, however, are less likely to vote for and use cannabis for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is social stigma, some experts say. The pressure to be a "good mom" is intense, said Jones, and seemingly incompatible with supporting legal pot. But that's changing, too.

Goldstein said Law Enforcement Against Prohibition has created a special Moms and Cops Coalition that engages and educates communities with a powerful message: The drug war amounts to a war on women, families and kids. "The war on cannabis and the greater drug war is more detrimental to our families and communities than regulating the market and having a robust educational system in place," Goldstein said. "We don't need to ruin kids' lives to protect them from the harms of drugs. Look at what we've done with tobacco."

California attorney Jennifer Ani, who specializes in Child Protective Services cases filed against medical marijuana patients who are mothers, said, "Women are under siege. ... Medical marijuana patients can lawfully be parents, but in practice with Child Protective Services, it's so subjective."

The number-one thing people can do on Mother's Day to end the anti-family drug war is be honest, Jones said. "If you are a cannabis consumer and you know your momma loves you, then tell her you're a cannabis consumer. If you're a mom who's a cannabis consumer, come out. This is our gay marriage moment. If people would just come out of the closet and admit who they are, everyone can realize this is not a frightening, fearful issue."

Buying mom a "baby-sitter and a joint" on Mother's Day can't hurt either, she said.

Legalization@eastbayexpress.com


[illegible]

NEWS

A Testing Nightmare in Oakland Schools?

Teachers say that the new standardized test is disrupting class time, is plagued by technical malfunctions, and is an unfair assessment of student performance.

By Sam Levin

Chao Garcia's fourth-grade students spent twelve hours taking standardized tests last week. The teacher at Esperanza Elementary School in the Elmhurst district of East Oakland had anticipated that the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), a new state exam tied to federal Common Core standards, might be draining for students. But it was worse than she expected. That's because her students were taking the test on Chromebooks — new Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) laptop computers that, according to multiple teachers, have been plagued by technical malfunctions before and during the test.

"They are stressed out ... and they are discouraged," Garcia said of her fourth-graders, explaining that one student's exam essay was completely erased because of a glitch that Garcia couldn't fix. Others had to restart computers because of various malfunctions, including the failure of audio technology required for certain questions. "These kids are guinea pigs," she said, adding, "We all know this is not the best use of students' time."

Teachers throughout OUSD said that the SBAC has caused a host of problems for instructors and students, arguing that the district's implementation of the test — both in terms of scheduling and its technology plan — has been chaotic and needlessly disruptive of class time. For starters, teachers lamented the fact that the district chose to administer the test exclusively on Chromebooks, but did not purchase enough laptops to accommodate all students taking the exam. As a result, schools have had to scramble to share the computers, which means the testing at some sites has gone on for weeks.

Additionally, teachers argued that the test itself has been unnecessarily confusing for students, both in terms of the content of questions and the presentation on Chromebooks. Instructors, in turn, have questioned how well the test measures students' skills and said that the scores will do little to help teachers develop curricula.

The debate in Oakland comes as teachers and education activists across the country have increasingly scrutinized the controversial exams aligned with the federal Common Core, which aims to establish uniform standards for math and English Language Arts (ELA). Unlike New York and a few other states, California has not seen any large-scale "opt-out" movements, in which parents allow their children to skip Common Core exams in protest of the federal mandates and high-stakes testing. Still, OUSD teachers said there have been growing frustrations about the SBAC this year — some ideological and others related to the logistical nightmares that the test has apparently created.

"The district loves to say that they put students first ... but we don't have enough computers," said Elizabeth [illegible], who teaches history and literature at Oakland Technical High School in the Temescal district. "And now they are expecting students to pick up the slack when the administration messed up."

Throughout OUSD, students in third through eighth grade and eleventh grade are taking the SBAC this spring. The state estimates that the math and ELA


CARNIVAL
City Center





NEWS

Behind Closed Doors

Public agencies in Oakland and elsewhere in the East Bay routinely violate local and state transparency laws.

By Darwin BondGraham



Oakland City Hall

Think indie













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Inspector General Goes Postal





The High Cost of Driving While Poor

By Sam Levin

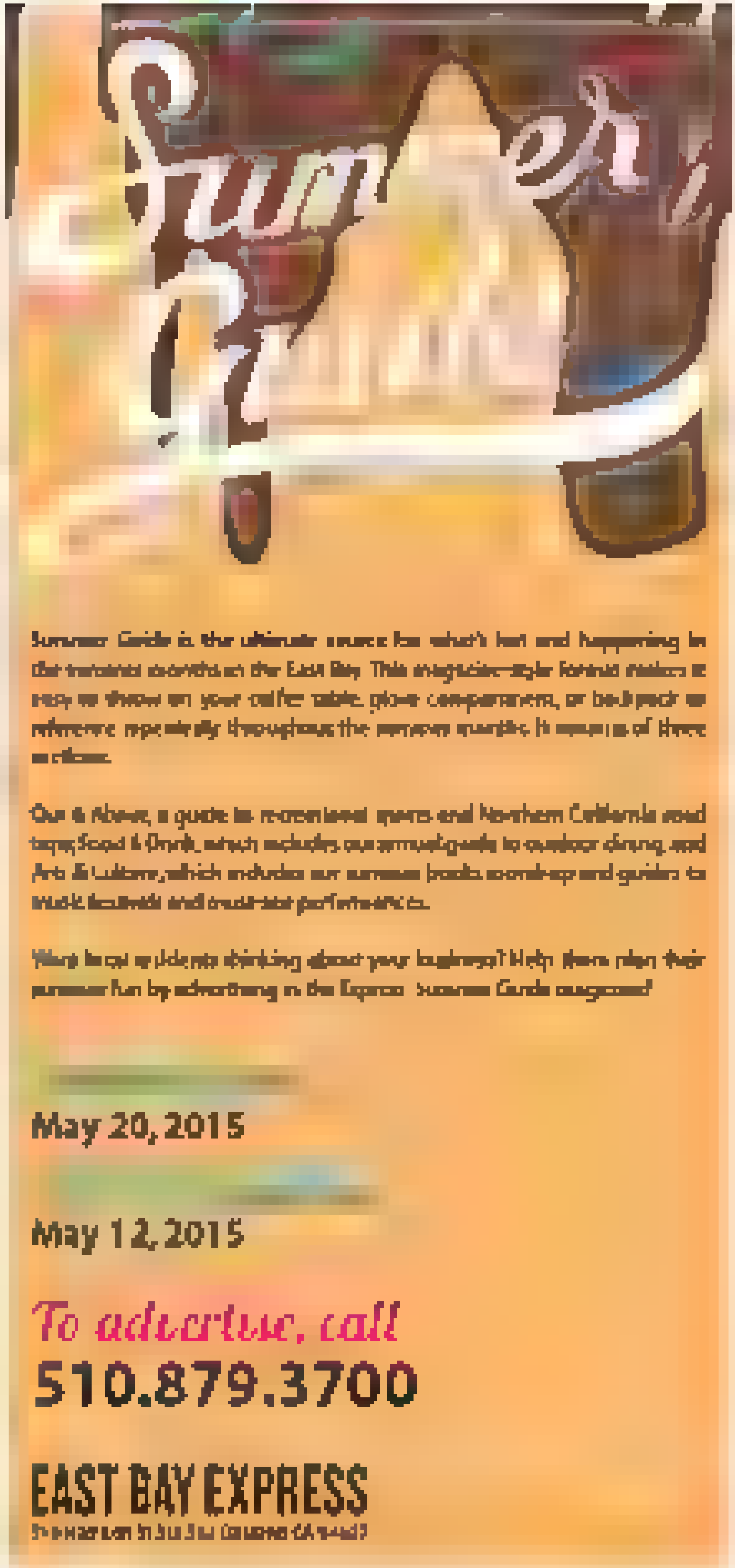
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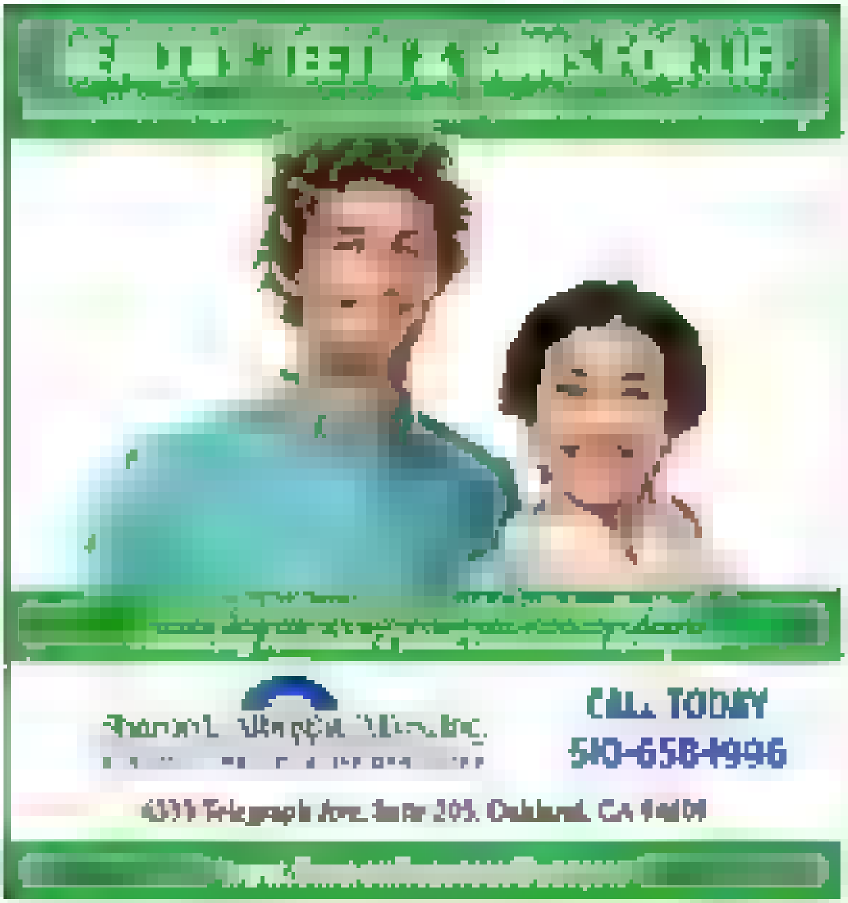



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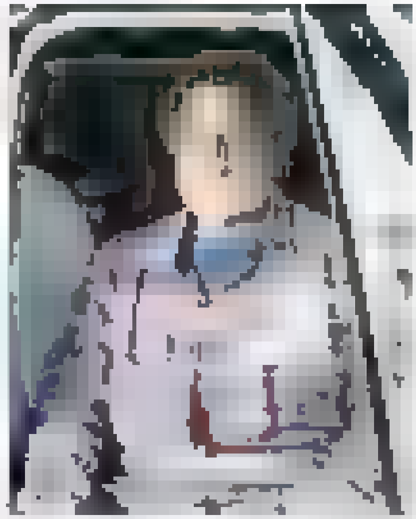

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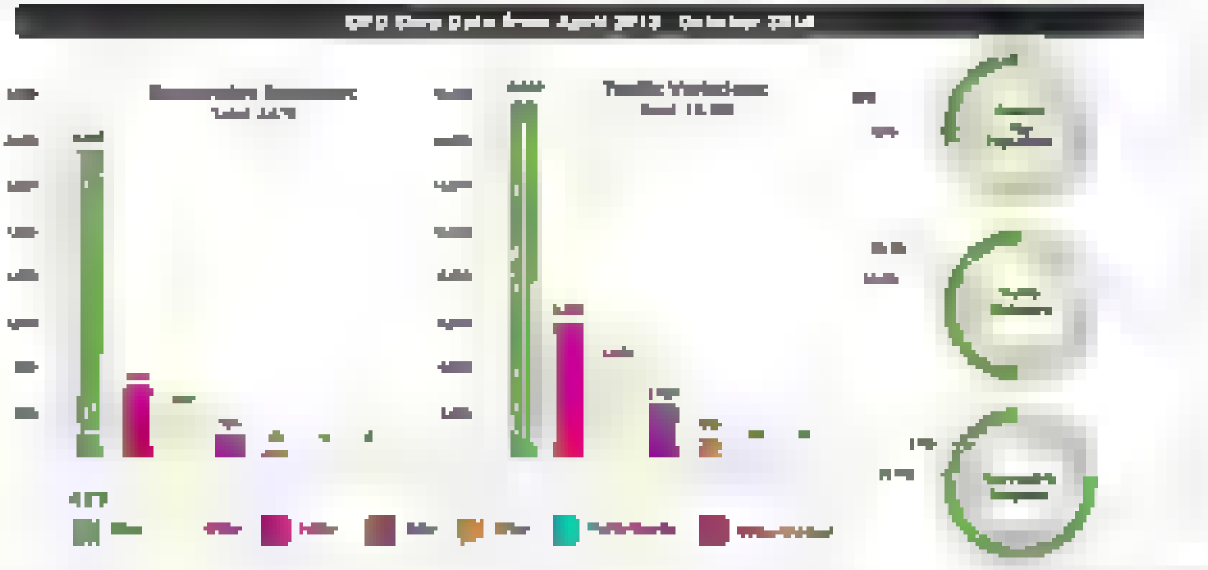

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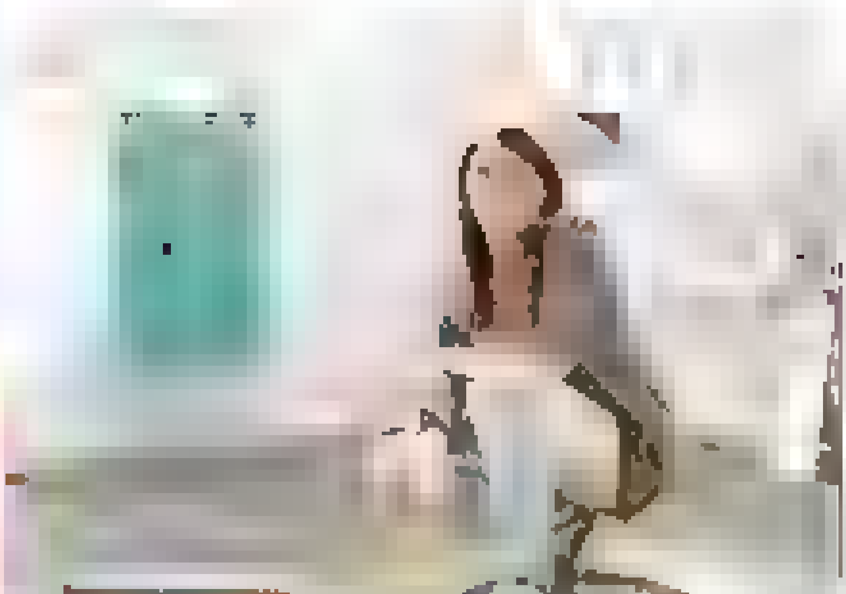

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The Work of Art

Interface Gallery director Suzanne L'Heureux engages the community in a discussion of art and labor through a crowdfunding campaign that is designed to pay her artists.

By Sarah Burke

Breaking Down Prison Walls

Sara "Mariposa" Fonseca, an inmate sentenced to solitary confinement, gives Bay Area audiences an intimate look at incarceration in a play she co-wrote through prison letters.

By Sam Lewin



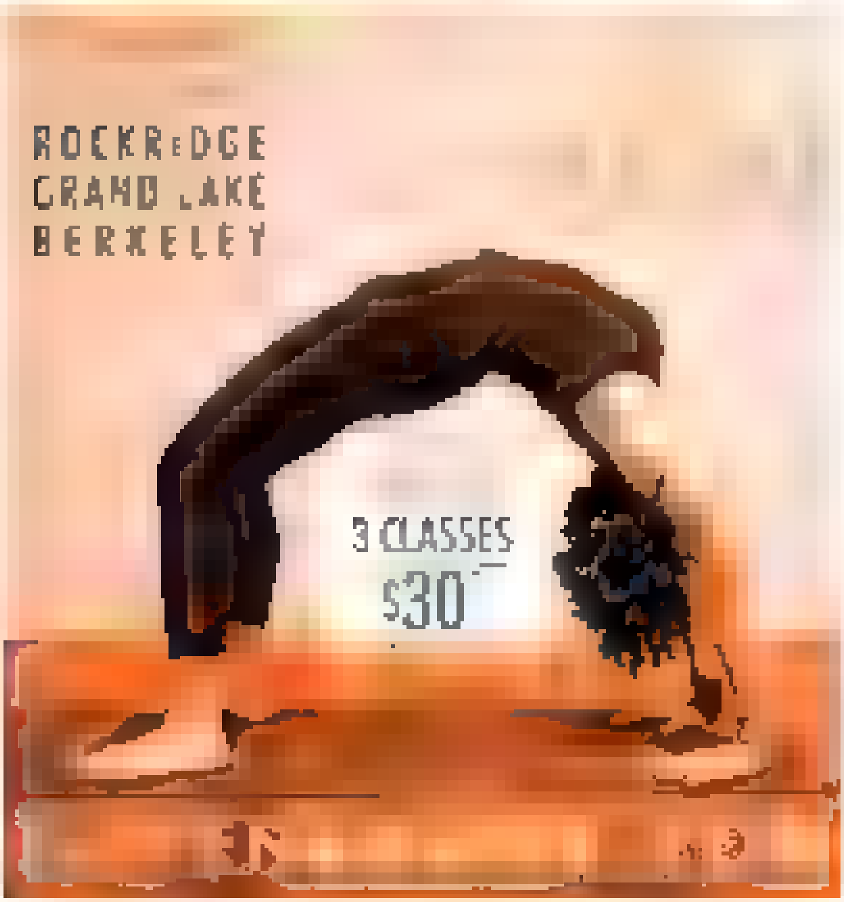
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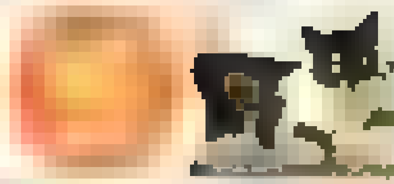
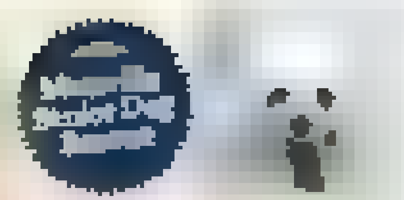
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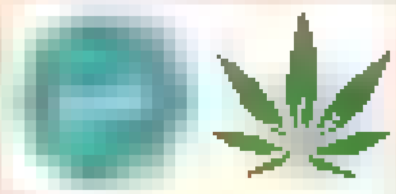


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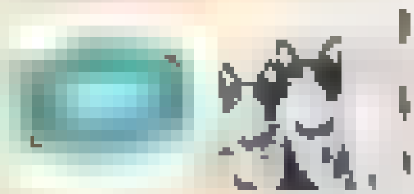
More Listings Online

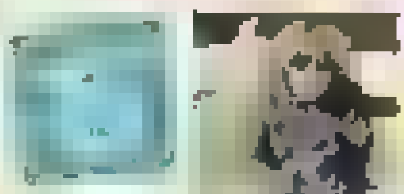
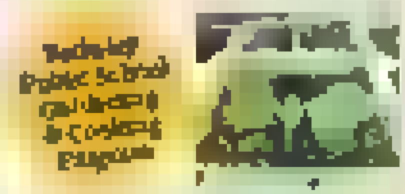
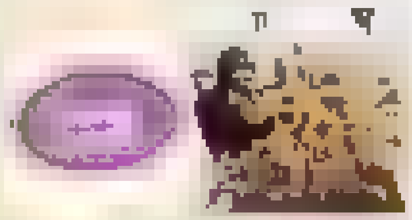
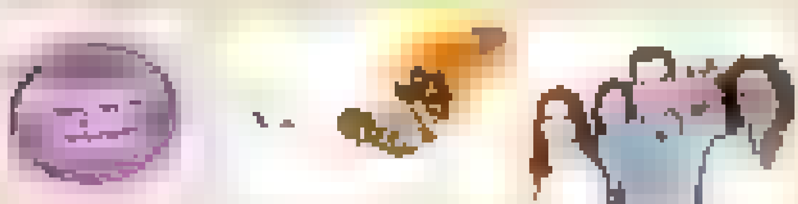



Berkeley Playhouse



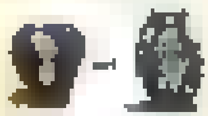














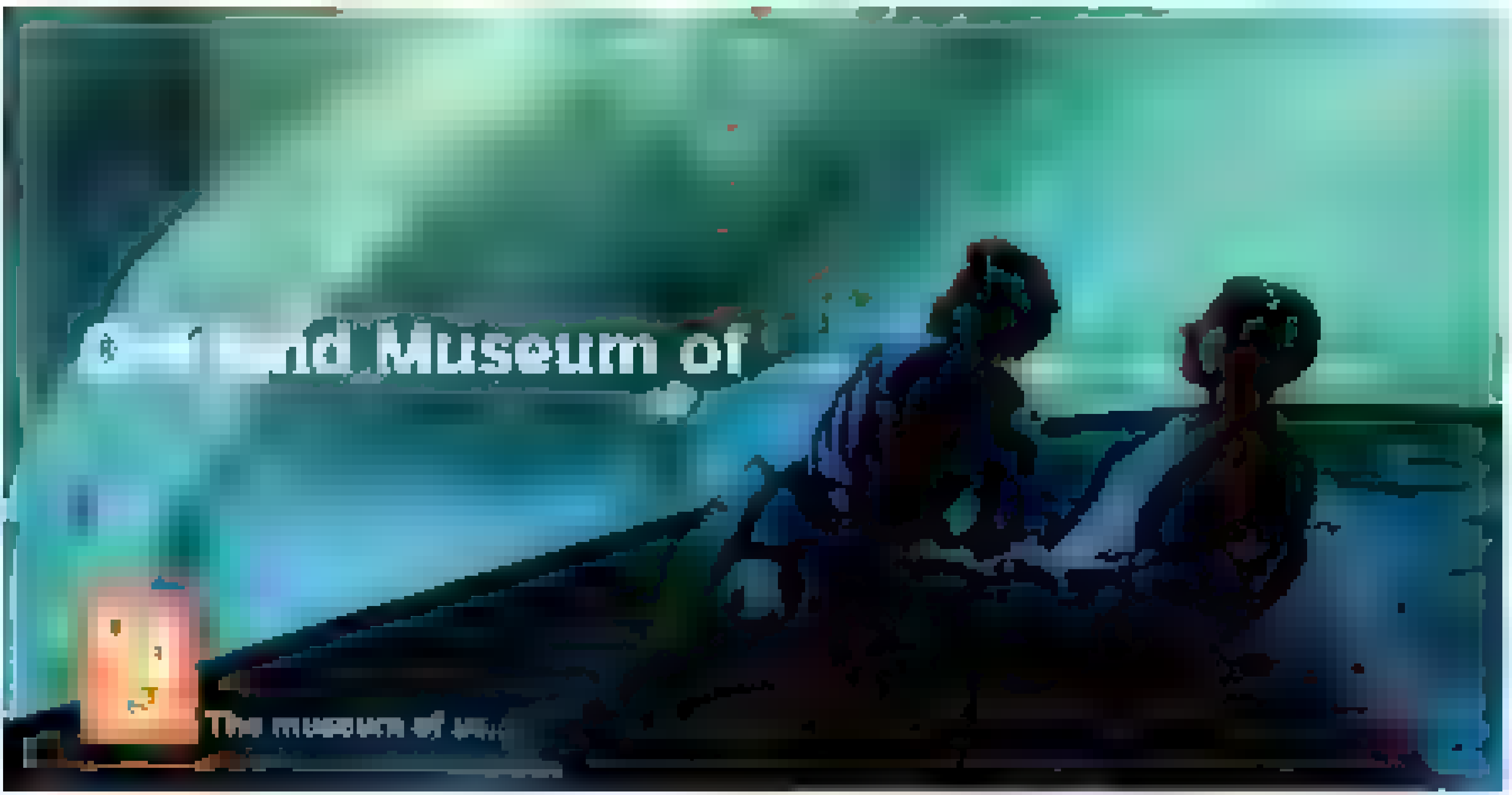




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Museum of

Ladies' Choice

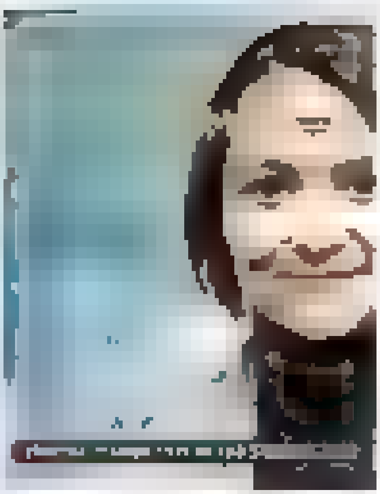
In Arched by Women, choreographer Sarah Bush pays homage to the voices of the Women's Music Movement through her personal story of coming out.

By Sarah Burke



Event Details

More Listings Online

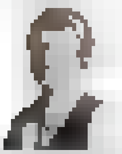




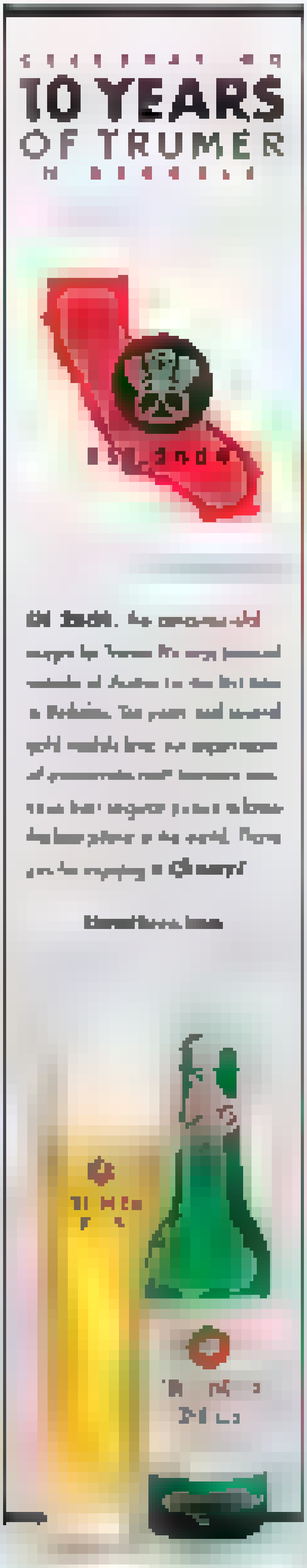
The Hijabi Chronicles



It's Time to Hang the Hooter Hider Out to Dry









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By Luke Tsai


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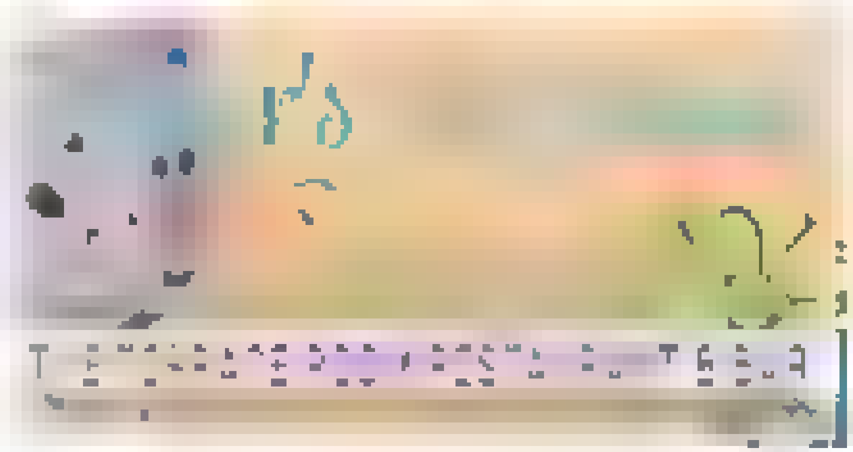
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Mother's Day Brunch at [illegible]



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Wherein our music editor parses choice discs from pedestrian dreg.

By Sam Lefebvre

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THURSDAY 7

Blues, Folk, & Country

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip Hop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Raggaeton

Blues, Folk, & Country

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip Hop

FRIDAY 8

Blues, Folk, & Country

Classical & Opera

Peter Brötzmann



The F Word: A Punk Feminist Party

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

Blues, Folk, & Country

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

SATURDAY 9

All Ages

Blues, Folk, & Country

Classical & Opera

Gospel & Vocal

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

VENUE DIRECTORY EAST BAY

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

Blues, Folk, & Country

Classical & Opera

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Gospel & Vocal

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

SUNDAY 10

All Ages

Blues, Folk, & Country

Classical & Opera

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip-Hop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

Blues, Folk, & Country

Gospel & Vocal

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip Hop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

MONDAY 11

Classical & Opera

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Blues, Folk, & Country

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip Hop

TUESDAY 12

All Ages

Blues, Folk, & Country

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip Hop

Blues, Folk, & Country

Classical & Opera

Experimental & Avant-Garde

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

WEDNESDAY 13

All Ages

Blues, Folk, & Country

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

Soul, Funk, R&B, & Hip Hop

World, Latin, Reggae, & Reggaeton

Blues, Folk, & Country

Jazz, Lounge, & Cabaret

Rock & Pop

THURSDAY 7

FRIDAY 8

SATURDAY 9

SUNDAY 10

MONDAY 11

TUESDAY 12

TRANCE MUTATIONS

WEDNESDAY 13

Free Will Astrology

Horoscopes for the week of May 7-13

By Rob Brezsny







Teachable Moments

Inappropriate dick pics.

By Dan Savage

Last summer, I reconnected with a high school teacher I hadn't seen for a year. We first met when I was fifteen, and I had nothing but respect for him and his intelligence. I also had a crush on him for the next four years. Fast-forward a year. He is sexting me and sending dick pics and wants to hook up. He has told me he loves me. I feel violated and tricked, like he was supposed to be someone I could trust and he didn't respect that. Now I wonder how teachers really see underage high school girls. This whole experience has made me feel dirty. Moreover, he has never respected that I have a boyfriend and that I want nothing to do with his advances. I met up with a former classmate, and she told me that this teacher and another teacher said similar things to her. But most former classmates of mine still believe him to be a respectable man and a great teacher. But I know him for what he really is, and when I think of it, I get so angry. How do I move on from this?

Sickened Thoroughly Over Pervertedness

I would never want to minimize the creepiness factor of a former teacher sending you dick pics and refusing to take "I want nothing to do with your advances" for an answer. (And you didn't just say "I have a boyfriend" and hope that he would hear "And I want nothing to do with your advances," right? Because if all you said was "I have a boyfriend," STOP, he may have heard, "I would love to fuck you, but I have a boyfriend.") And I definitely believe high school teachers — all teachers who work with minors — should refrain from fucking current students and sending dick pics to former students. One is statutory rape and an abuse of power (fucking underage students); the other is career suicide (sexting former students will get your ass fired eventually), as for the other lesson you take...

This guy was your teacher when you were fifteen ... you had a crush on him for four years ... a crush he doubtless picked up on ... and you somehow reconnected with him after not seeing him for a year ... and one year after reconnecting, he's still contacting you despite your rejection of him.

If I've got the timeline right (math is still hard!), STOP, you were 19 or 20 when you reconnected with your former teacher and you're 20 or 21 now. Maybe even 22. That means nothing happened — nothing appropriate or inappropriate — until you were (1) no longer his student and (2) legally an adult. Your former teacher did nothing inappropriate when you were his student (you surely would've included that detail), and so far as you know, he's never behaved inappropriately toward a current student. Which means either your former teacher has a solid age-range floor (he's not attracted to anyone under the age of fifty — he's capable of exercising self-control (not only can he refrain from fucking girls under the age of 18 who he happens to find attractive, but he can conduct himself in such a way that those girls have no idea he finds them attractive).

Your former classmate's story complicates the picture — and peaks the picture — but she was a former student and an adult when these teachers said "similar things" to her, right? That's still creepy, of course, it's still not-okay, and it's still potential career suicide for both these idiots. But it's not technically illegal. If you honestly believe that either or both of these idiots are behaving inappropriately toward their current students, STOP, you should approach the administration at your old high school with your concerns. Doing so will result in the end of their careers as educators — but if these guys are trying to bait their current students and/or grooming their current students for fucking a year or two after they graduate, then both should get the fuck out of teaching.

As for feeling dirty, STOP, I don't understand where that's coming from. You didn't do anything dirty. The realization that this teacher might have had a crush on you back when you had one on him — and he might not have had a crush on you then — shouldn't hurl you into some sort of existential crisis. If knowing that a teacher might have found you sexually attractive back when you were a junior in high school leaves you feeling violated, tricked, and angry, STOP, if that realization has you convinced that all teachers are secret perverts, then you seem to be operating under a faulty set of assumptions about what teachers are. They're not robots, they're not eunuchs, they're not humanoids from a parallel universe whose lives aren't occasionally complicated by an unwanted sexual attraction. Teachers are human beings, and like all other human beings*, they sometimes experience sexual attraction, including sexual attraction of the unwelcome and/or inappropriate variety. What they choose to do about it — suppress it, act on it — determines whether they're respectable men and women and (possibly) great teachers or total creeps and/or sex offenders.

This does not, of course, excuse what your former teacher is doing to you now. He's sexually harassing you. Tell him to stop and threaten to take it up with the school board if he doesn't. How do you move on? You do what I do on Twitter: Block and forget the asshole — BAFTA. ◆

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